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SCRIBES ISSUE

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STAFF

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Associate Editors Claire Dorsett, Bettie Willson

Art Editors Susan Perry, Lou Ann Smith

Business Manager Mary Clark Webb

Publicity Editor Lou Ann Taylor

Circulation Manager Nancy Minor

Faculty Adviser Dr. Nancy Stewart

The Scribes' Page

Doris Chitwood

Marianne Coggin

Patsy Ann Davison

Donnie Donaldson

Tomoko Hata

Jere House

Pauline Mann

Jane McCain

Betty Moss

Marian Mustoe

Jean Thrasher

Syd Willis

Bettie Willson

Each year, the Scribes choose a theme for their issue, and for this year, the Scribes have chosen for their theme a quotation from Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*:

*"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."*

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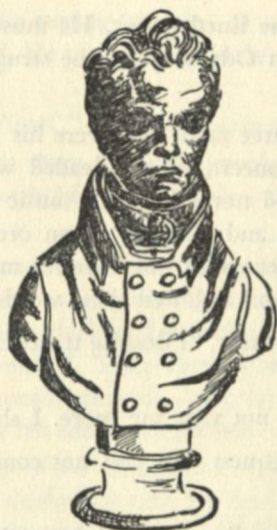
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The Mute Fire

By Bettie Willson

"An artist can easily enough slip from sheer love of art into hatred of mankind."—Jean-Paul Richter

A world of silence closed in. Day by day, the periods of silence grew longer and longer until no sound pierced his ear drums. For a space of time—days, weeks, months—he tried desperately to hear. He knew his hope was vain. The thought of facing a life devoid of sound—of music—stung him. He did not want to be deaf. Take away his sight, his legs, even, but not his precious gift of hearing . . . O God.

He shut himself away: no callers—no lessons—no more doctors. He wrote furiously, sitting before his gleaming piano. He wrote on scraps of lined paper, jotting down the notes that almost burst his head with their frenzy. He was filled with music. He could hear, in his mind's ear, each thunderous passage, each majestic note. He had to put it down! Running his large hands over the polished keys, he marveled at the strangeness of it. Vibrations tingled in his arms. There was no sound. Yet, he could hear it in his head; rising, falling, soft, tender, pleading, jubilant, victorious mu-

sic! His pen raced over the lined paper. He must finish it—and soon. It would be a symphony—an Ode to Joy—the struggle of mankind's search for God.

And it was finished. Three men, who were his friends, asked to hear it. They were eager for a concert. They pleaded with him. The bitterness smote him then. He would never hear his music played again. He would never hear the squeaking and whining of an orchestra as it tuned for a performance. No. *No!* They could not have his music! He sent them away with angry, bitter words, and followed these words with more words.

To one of these men he wrote, "I despise treachery. Do not visit me again. No concert."

To a second, "Let him not visit me more. I shall have no concert."

And, to the third, "I request that you not come again until I send for you. No concert."

The days were full of loneliness, the nights of bitter brooding. Again he saw no one; admitted no callers. The dark, passionate face became tense with the strain of listening for notes he would never hear. The straight, firm lower lip jutted obstinately, and his massive brow creased with frown lines. He would sit, far into the night, watching the rain fall—silently. He would stand before the grate, seeing the fire dance—silently. Once, he ventured into the street, only to meet an acquaintance whose mouthings and gesticulations he could not understand.

Only in the countryside did he find peace. The silent hills before him, the mute clouds sailing above him, the lazy gliding of an eagle high in the sky, brought him no comfort and peace of mind because with things such as these, he did not need to hear.

He grew better. His mouth was not so grim nor his forehead so creased. His good friends returned, urging him to give his music to the world—the symphony—the "Ode to Joy". He consented, but the bitterness came back. It lay, tightly coiled, waiting a rebuff, a disappointment. He bickered, he argued, he found fault with the orchestra, the chorus, the hall which was to be used. Despite him, the date was set and came at last.

On the seventh day of May in 1824, he walked to the podium of the Karntnertor Theater in Vienna, lifted his baton, and nodded his massive head. He followed the score in his mind, hearing the music swell, feeling the vibration of the chorus shake the platform under his feet. His body trembled with waves of sound. His dark eyes darted over the orchestra, first the violins, then the horns, then the woodwinds—checking—making certain that they were with him. Something was wrong. They were distracted. He frowned, his baton measuring the beats in angry jerks. What was it? Something was wrong. A hand touched his sleeve. He paused in surprise, and turned to face the audience, which stood, beating their hands together,

their faces contorted into gaping mouths, shouting words that he could not hear. He was stunned. He turned questioningly to the violinist who had touched his arm.

"They are shouting 'Vivat!' " the violinist mouthed.

He stood and looked at them, his arms hanging limply at his sides. And still the bitterness was with him, because he could not hear what others heard.

After the concert, he quarreled with his friends, again. Shouting, waving his hands in the air, stalking angrily back and forth before the fire, he called them thieves. He told them that he knew they had stolen part of the gate receipts. They were astonished. They showed him an itemized list of expenses. The figures balanced perfectly. Still, he would not believe it. He ordered them away. They left sadly, one by one.

After they had gone, he stood before the mute fire, hardly conscious of its warmth, watching the shadows it cast. Slowly, he moved to the piano and, in the darkness, ran his hands over the cold keys, feeling his music—his great music. The words of the choral whirled through his numb brain.

*"He who knows the pride and pleasure
Of a friendship firm and strong,
He who has a wife to treasure,
Let him swell our mighty song.
If there is a single being
Who can call a heart his own,
And denies it—then unseeing,
Let him go and weep alone."**

*Marek, George R., "Program Notes on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony."

DREAMING

*Beneath a canopy of icy blue . . .
Scattered with some frilly eyelet . . .
I dream as ripples play about the shore . . .
Bowing daisies struck by the hand of wind . . .
A dead earth renewing her life and beauty . . .
I dream of heaven as I lie in her glory . . .
The sun sinks lower in the west . . .
The trees sing songs of hidden birds . . .
I breathe a freshness of the earth . . .
For when I dream . . .
I touch this heaven of which mortals speak.*

D. Chitwood

REFLECTIONS OF A YOUNG MAN (AGED 6)

*I'm very brave now I'm a man,
I'm almost six, you see,
But when I was a little child,
Things used to frighten me.
Not things like bears and snakes and dogs;
I thought that they were fun.
And how I laughed at silly girls,
When they would scream and run!
But after Mother said my prayers,
And tucked me into bed,
And took away the light, such thoughts
Would run around my head!
The windows, friendly during the day,
Became black leering eyes,
And the drapes that hung around them,
Draped like monsters in disguise.
In the corner near the fireplace,
Stood my little chest of drawers,
I thought it was a big black bear,
That'd pounce on me with roars
On the bedpost hung my bathrobe,
But it seemed a ghost instead,
With bony hand outstretched out before,
To snatch me from my bed.
And how I stared around me,
With my eyes so big and wide,
Then I'd crawl beneath my covers,
Trying to find a place to hide.
It's really very silly now
To think I was afraid,
Now that I'm a grown-up man,
With long pants—they're storemade!
And when I go to bed at night
I never cringe and weep,
But pull the covers 'round my head,
And drift right off to sleep.*

—Marian Mustoe

First Day of School

By Marianne Coggin

She awoke early that morning, way before time to get up. It was silly, she knew, but somehow she couldn't make herself relax and sleep again. Each moment seemed too dear, too important.

Until 7:30, she managed to lie quietly in the bed. Then she woke her husband and started down to Kathy's room. The door was open and she tiptoed in. She didn't want to wake her—not yet, not quite yet. Her hand reached out and gently rearranged a tiny blond ringlet. It was the soft, wispy hair of a baby. "Baby hair" she whispered aloud, then added almost defiantly, "*just* a baby." She looked helplessly around the room for a moment.



Suddenly, however, her eyes became resolute and she leaned down to shake the small shoulders. "Mommy, Mommy, today?" The child grinned sleepily.

"Yes, darling, today." The Mother's voice was soft, nearly inaudible. She lifted the child onto the floor and began dressing her, a caress in every touch.

Soon Kathy was ready and together they walked down to the breakfast table, where the Father waited. Eager anticipation danced in the little girl's face and her words fell upon each other with excitement. Both Mother and Father watched her lovingly, but the Father's face held only proud joy.

After breakfast was over, the Father left for work. The Mother, unmindful of dirty breakfast dishes, walked with the little girl to the door, purposefully matching the child's gaiety with her own. Then she kissed her lightly and smiling, watched her as she skipped down the sidewalk. Once just before she was out of sight, the child turned and waved.

Be Your Own Sweet Self

By Patsy Ann Davison

The modern girl has all the accumulated advice of past centuries to prepare her for a date. In her grandmother's day the secrets of charm were learned, behind closed doors, of course, from older sisters and friends. The modern girl, however, has but to check out a book from the town library to learn the easy steps to romantic success.

Perhaps the most important rule is to listen attentively to all that your date has to say. If you can cultivate a quick interest in fishing, chemical analysis, football records and car engines, you are on the road to success. If you cannot show a little enthusiasm over the relative power of the latest challengers for the feather-weight boxing cup, then try the "interested look" while your mind concentrates on a more fascinating dress pattern. The success of this plan depends on how quickly he changes the subject, for you wouldn't want to be caught with a fixed smile during his discourse on the injustice of his teacher's grading system. If you venture so far as to make a comment, be sure that it is an agreeable one (agreeable meaning that it echoes his thoughts on the subject). It would be of no avail to state an opposing view, for not only would it endanger your chances of success, but also it would put another black mark against the "reasoning power" of womanhood.

If by chance your date has taken one too many psychology courses and as a result suspects that you have a personality of your own, be sure you select the correct one. Most girls make the mistake of merely classifying the boy as athletic, intellectual, social, or artistic and then tries to meet the standard. Then the bewildered young lady is amazed as her intellectual object of affection gives her the shaft for the beautiful but dumb type.

The ability to ignore what a man says and does and to determine what he really likes seems to be the one art that the books ignore. The real test comes when a girl, cutely dressed in the latest in sportswear, goes to meet a blind date. If she realizes that she has made one small error in judgment, it takes a master of the art to emerge with an air of sophisticated mystery from the sign-out-desk.

But whatever you do, do not be critical. If he has friends who insult you, try to limit your comments to "Oh, how quaint", or "Your friend certainly is clever." If he is in the gawky teen-age stage of dancing, a smile and pleasant chatter might drown out the sound of cracking toes. A general attitude of "everything you do is wonderful, just wonderful" will make him feel that at last he has found someone who, partially at least, understands and appreciates him.

But whatever book you read, there is always the same last important rule. After all, the boy always likes the girl who is just "her own sweet self . . ."

Adventure

By Tomoko Hata

"You had better get in the boat now," Mother said. "All right . . . Good-bye mother, write me." It was a beautiful but hot, hot August day when I left Japan. The brass band of the boat began to play "Auld Lang Syne". Colorful tapes were thrown each other between people on boat and pier. People called out to each other "Good-bye son", "Good-bye, father". Mother, brothers, sisters, little nephew, nieces, teachers, friends, everybody looked so small from the high deck of the big boat. We couldn't hear each other any more but I understood that they were telling "Take care of yourself, don't study too hard but learn some!" Boat started to move slowly, and turned her position. At this moment I turned my mind to the new way where I am going, or rather I have already stepped in. "This is an adventure," I realized for the first time. Then I got scared more and more every day.

The Pacific Ocean was getting deeper and deeper. Next morning when I came up to the deck again there were just water and sky in sight. Reading, writing, eating- sleeping, watching the change of the color of water and the shape of the clouds was my life for 12 days on the boat, except one break at Hawaii. Everybody on the boat hurried to step on the land at Hawaii. A friend of my friend met me at the pier and took me to sight-seeing. It was beautiful island with bright color flowers and green trees. The whole island was filled with sweet smell of flowers. He took me to the Japanese restaurant. It was wonderful to see and smell Japanese food after the seven days I ate the peculiar American-Chinese-Japanese food on the boat. But I could not eat a bite. Yes, I got land-sick, instead of sea-sick. I wanted to go back to my boat and actually at the moment when I got on boat my sick has gone. A day before the boat got to San Francisco everybody began packing, getting addresses from the new friend on the boat, checking pass-port, studying English conversation. Weather was turning cold. About 4 o'clock in the morning some body kindly woke us up "We can see the Golden Bridge!" Bridge showed up beautifully in the misty cold morning. "Oh, America, I finally got here, but I have to use English all the time from now," I thought. Three days in San Francisco were terrible for me. Get the train ticket, check my luggage, in unfamiliar place with my land sickness. Anyhow I got on the train after I missed one which the American in S. F. suggested me. Sandwiches and some drinks was only thing to get easily for me for three days on train, breakfast, lunch and dinner! I took at least 10 minutes to find "Travelers Aid" at big station of

Kansas City. A sweet old lady told me what to do and gave me a name of Hotel. After I settled in the nice little room of hotel I was alone and had nothing to do. I laid down on bed and count the days what I have to stay in America. All next day in K. C. I was hungry but I did not know how to order myself food. Finally I got a piece of apple pie by pointing at it. The train from Kansas City was beautiful and comfortable and fast but I had to change the train in Atlanta. Before the train got to Atlanta a man brought a telegram. I opened nervously, "COME STRAIGHT TO MACON. I WILL SEE YOU AT THE STATION. KATHERINE JOHNSON." How it pleased me. Of course when I saw Miss Johnson I thought I was saved and actually I was saved.

All these events are a roll of sweet memories now, two years from then. Adventure? Yes, it was until I got used to this country. But, how joyful, peaceful and wonderful adventure it has been!!

DORMITORY NIGHT LIFE

Quick—take thy wedge to thy bed corner.

to thy closet, fly—

Sit uꝑon thy settle and eat—

Be merry. For coke and cake do not often

befall thee at thy college.

Praise be to the bestower

James of Macon.

Unto you may our praises fall

For unto you do we, the eaters,

owe gratitude.

We sit meekly in our cubicle

partaking of golden crumbs and drops.

Letting not a single crumb fall upon

the sheet.

Farewell to thee and may our praises be.

—Betty Moss

Bachelors

Jere House

I hate bachelors. They are so nonchalant about getting married. Most bachelors are divided into three groups, and the rest of them aren't divided (afraid they'll fall). These are the main types of bachelors that I have come in contact (close contact) with:

1. The "women-are-no-good-and-never-will-be" type: These familiar specimens of shrimp-hood are usually seen standing sullenly in a library with their horn-rimmed glasses hanging in space a slight distance from their noses, reading books on the biographical inferiority of the female sex. They thrive on off-color jokes about the triumph of male over female. If a new acquaintance inquires as to his marital status, the woman-hater puts his eyes and glasses back into their proper position and quotes seventeen experts who say that marriage is merely a state of glorified self-love, and spouts excerpts from eighteen more masterpieces expounding upon the unadaptability of women, the selfishness of women, and the stupidity of women. The new acquaintance is afraid to go home to his wife, so he jumps off the top of the library. Our friend, the bachelor, goes on pulling books off the shelf and telling shady jokes. No, he does not like Marilyn Monroe. He is of the opinion that she resorts to torturing her victims. I hate bachelors.

2. The "I'm-afraid-of-women" type: This yellow-livered babe-in-the-woods we see lurking in the dark shadows of second rate movie-houses, witnessing such heart-rending romances as "The Rap of the Knock" and "Absalom and Akitohell". These he basks in until he feels that even *he* could summon enough courage to approach one of these frightening fantasies. However, the first woman he sees when he waltzes out of the theatre is a young female popcorn-vendor, and suddenly he loses all his bought-and-paid-for ego. He meanders aimlessly from movie to movie, doomed to a lonely existence with Sophie Tucker, Jean Harlow, and Jane Russell. Poor chap. I hate bachelors.

3. The "I-am-big-and-strong-and-don't-need-a-woman" type: This muscular marvel can be found in any post office removing his muscle-building correspondence course from his mailbox with the aid of a crane. Upon the approach of any female, whether an aged schoolteacher desiring information (as to where the local Arthur Murray studio is) or whether a small female urchin (searching frantically for the Museum of Ancient Hangnails), he flings back his strength-sodden shoulders, tilts his health-hardened head, throws out his copper-coated chest, raises his armored-artery

arm, and says, "I'm sorry, lady, I can't help you. I've got a gym class to meet in thirty-nine seconds." Females are too fragile to fondle, so he'll spend the rest of his days taking gym courses, so he can outrun the pursuing females, which are obviously figments of his muscle-ridden imagination.

These are a few examples of the bamboozled bachelors of today. I hate 'em—'specially the unmarried ones.

(Op. Note: Miss House, did it ever occur to you that there is a female counterpart??)

PUSH BUTTON PARTY

By Syd Willis

Up into a scratchy organdy moon . . .
Up over the speckly screen trees . . .
Slide down; slide round the ring round the moon
Fingertips touch on a star-sparkling-sparkling . . .
Look down belows a mergings
Like single sounds in a sea shell . . .
Like a twisted thread; like holding hands;
Like a million becoming one . . .
A push-button party . . .
A rocking ride on a shell of a world . . .
A voice from the mergings a voice from the millions likes
One . . . But not like one below the color on top . . .
Not like one really . . .
A voice with lightness of butterfly wings
Old, like my stars,
"Whose world? Why a shell?"
"You, Young Youth . . . are a world . . .
"You, Young Youth . . . are a twisted skein . . .
"A holding hands . . . a million . . . and a One . . .
"You, Young Youth . . . melt tears and sighs
"Smile with your sun and sparkle with your stars.
"Shake hands with Truth . . ."
"It's yours . . . and It . . .
"Make . . . or Break . . . ? You and yours . . .
Twisting threads and holding hands . . .
Push button rides . . . My world? My Truth
And the magic merging universe roars on because:
Hope speaks . . . Nor all your tears wash out . . .

Ode to the Seniors

By Donnie Donaldson

It is 9:56—May 31st. A hush sweeps over the group of parents and friends assembled together. A few more minutes ye olde song "Pomp and Circumstance" will begin—everybody is ready, eager. This is graduation—your graduation—and you know what? There's an empty seat in the third row, fifth from the left. It seems that you're still writing a small term paper in yon library

You know it was a strange thing. You had sensed for simply ages—say approximately since the month called September, that on one of the ensuing days that you would be expected to put on one of those very attractive lids called mortar boards plus a Superior Judge's robe and go to this small ceremony. Good night! You hadn't adopted that library for your habitual residence for four "rather long at times" years for nothin'! I mean after all, this walking-down-the aisle day, (but also add that we certainly do not have such a pessimistic attitude) when you get those first two letters of the alphabet written on sheepskin or some other type of suitable pigment actually means something to you!

Yet in spite of all this you very sadly (and I can't emphasize that word *sadly* enough) waited until the 30th hour (the mortar board to be worn on the 31st) to "catch-up" on a small term paper besides your "accumulated" exams.

O Time! Where art thou? Or better still—O AB degree! How in the world am I gonna get you?

However, you brave the storm very gracefully. Saving your crackers from Sunday lunch for three weeks you prepare to skip all meals. Then you bribe a library assistant for a key to your "home away from home" and prepare to camp. Eating your cracker in the magazine section, sleeping in the reference books and looking into every manuscript in the place, except two (one of which was the dictionary) you spend the next three weeks therein with short intermissions for exams. Your subject—"Marriage Or A Career?" Ha! As if you had a choice!

But anyway, as I said before being interrupted by several paragraphs—it is 9:56 and the fifth seat from the left, third row, is still empty. Your roommate in the second row looks rather strange as she sits with her back to the speaker's rostrum. Her eyes are turned, squinting hard, toward the library. Whosh! Like a shot, the library door shoots open—a figure in black emerges waving some type of paper in one hand—the other is holding a mortar lid upon the head. Hurrah and all that—it's you and you've finished (except the footnotes which you plan to get to in a small post graduate course this summer). Doing a boogie beat to the "Circumstance", you deposit your **LAST** term paper into the lap of a certain professor as you

whiz by and crawling over four black figures you collapse into your seat just in time to hear your name called from the platform . . . Grinning broadly to the roommate in the second row, you crawl back again over the black figures and up the aisle to receive that *B-E-A-U-T-I-F-U-L D-I-P-L-O-M-A!* And to think you've been through all that undergraduate work for over two minutes! Good night! What brilliance! What excellence! Oh, well! What about it? You knew you could do it, didn't you? Ha! Anyway, to every little ole one a Happy Graduation!

A Brush With Sam Fuller

By Marian Mustoe

Hello. You're selling what? Oh, brushes. No, my mother isn't home. No, I don't know when she'll be back. Yes, I am a fine boy, but I'm *not* little! I'm six years old! My name is John. What's your name? Hey, that funny! Our garbage man's name is Sam, too! Sure, you can come in and wait for my mother.

I have a dog. His name is Iggy. He can do tricks. Do you have a dog? What's his name? Can he do tricks? Oh, you don't have a dog. Well, I have a dog, and his name is Iggy. He can sit up and beg and roll over and stand on his head and—No, my father's not home either—and do you know what? I can talk to him. Yes, I can too, boy! He sleeps with me in bed when I go to bed at night, and we talk all the time in bed. He tells me all about his dog friends—he has lots of dog friends cuz he is a friendly dog—and I tell him about my friends—I have lots of friends cuz I am friendly too. No, I dunno when my father will be home.

Hey! You ain't leavin', are you? Don'tcha want to see Iggy? I'll go call him in a minute.

You know what? My mommy and daddy said I couldn't really talk to Iggy. But I can. We go hunting sometimes in the woods, and he tells me right away when he knows where a squirrel is. He can smell them. Did you know that? Dogs can smell squirrels and things better'n people cuz their noses is over their faces more. Iggy and me catch lots of squirrels sometimes when he is smelling good.

Don't go yet. I'll call my dog. Here, Iggy! Iggy! Iggy! Here he is! Ain't he pretty? Don't jump on Sam, Iggy. Doesn't he look like a good smelling dog? Down, Iggy. Wouldn't you like to have a dog like that to sleep with? Iggy, get down! Hey! Hey-Sam-Iggy-hey-wait-a-minute-where ya-goin'-hey-don't - bite - Sam - Iggy - Papa - said - if - you - bite - anyone - else - he would-send-you-away!! Hey!! Iggy!!

I don't know where that man was runing to, Mama, but he must have been a bad man, cuz the only people Iggy bites are bad people, don'tcha, Iggy, ole boy, good doggie?

Before the Dawn

By Pauline Mann

It was only eight o'clock, but the streets were already deserted. That's the way it is with these small towns, I thought. They're all alike; the people go to bed when the sun goes down except on Saturdays when they all go to the local movie. As a traveling salesman, I had known thousands of such places, and I didn't like any of them. I preferred the bright lights and noise of the city with its dimly lit cafes and people who laughed and danced till just before dawn. Maybe I was the typical traveling salesman—the kind people joked about—but I liked it. I was happy moving around a lot and I liked fast, easy living; no one stepped on your toes that way.

I stood staring down the main street for a moment, looking at the dim street lights that barely cast a shadow on the narrow sidewalk. A sharp pain twanged at my side and I cursed myself silently for not having seen a doctor weeks ago about it. But then, the pain seldom lasted long, and I was a pretty busy man. Suddenly, on an impulse, I tucked my paper under my arm, and moved away from the drugstore walking in the opposite direction from my hotel.

"A man must write his own name on Life's roll book, and the script he uses will be the deeds he has done . . ." I had read that somewhere, and I thought of it now. What would these people's signature be? A special recipe? A Saturday sale? A Sunday School picnic? That wasn't much of a life, but I supposed they were happy. Travel, I decided, would be my big letter. Travel and a shrewd business mind.

I chuckled to myself at the idea of my turning philosophical, and stopped to light a cigarette. Then I turned down a side street and let my mind wander.

As I usually did when I was alone, I thought of Lisa—small, darkhaired Lisa, who could make you laugh no matter how bad you felt. I could have married her I suppose, but Lisa was not one to push a point, and I wasn't the type who hung around after the party was over. Still, I couldn't help thinking of her and wondering. She was probably settled down in some little house now just like these people. Maybe it was a good thing after all that I hadn't gotten too involved with her.

I don't know how long I walked or how many turns I made, but before

I knew it, I was lost. There weren't any houses now, just a narrow, dark road that was silently wrapping itself in an early fog. I turned around and started retracing my steps, but it was no use. The streets were all alike . . . all dark, deserted and unreal with the fog closing in on them. I quickened my pace and felt my heart hammering against my chest. This is silly, I thought, like a little boy who wakes before dawn and is afraid to go back to sleep or even to call his father. I laughed aloud at myself, and my voice was strange to my ears. I turned another corner, glanced back, and quickened my step. My side was hurting again.

Suddenly, I was aware of footsteps behind me. The normal thing to do, I told myself, is to stop and ask your way, but I couldn't fight down the idea that those footsteps were following me. Just to make sure, I slowed up to let whoever it was pass me. The footsteps slowed. I quickened my pace again and heard my pursuer match his steps to mine as I turned another corner.

Ahead of me lay a thick wooded area, behind me—I wasn't sure what was there, but I preferred the eerie realm of the woods to whatever was behind.

I was running now and my heart was beating as if it would burst from my body. My side was aching and I wanted to sit down and rest, but the footsteps were there, coming closer and closer, so I ran on. The limbs of the trees and bushes reached out and tore at my clothing scratching my arms and face. Still the footsteps came. My heart was beating loudly now, so loudly that each beat was like the relentless sea pounding against my eardrums. Still I ran, for on the other side of the forest, I felt, there lay safety. I stumbled once and every muscle in my body cried out in protest against getting up. Putting forth all my remaining strength, I got up and half stumbled, half ran on.

It was the still, grey hour before dawn breaks when I awoke. I was in my hotel room, but I could hear their voices around my bed. I couldn't see them, but I could hear their voices.

"Wish you'd found him sooner, Tony," the voice nearest me said.

"I called you as soon as I could, Doc," a younger voice said. "He was down by the park. Can you save him?"

"'Fraid not. That appendix has been ruptured too long. It's only a matter of time now."

The voices faded. The darkness is coming now . . . like a soft black cloud that folds around me. I know I shall die, but I'm not afraid anymore. I don't know who my pursuer was. Maybe he was Death or maybe he was the things I haven't done. It doesn't matter, it's too late now to change the script and it's almost dawn already.

Cud'n Willis and Harvard Classics

By Jane McCain

"It's a good thing," I said to my little brother with dignity, "that there is no insanity in our family, or people would say you *surely* inherited it!"

"Now, now," interrupted my mother from the next room, "is that a very nice way to talk to your little brother?"

"I just said I'm glad there's no insanity in the family . . ." I stopped for Mother was giggling. "Well, there isn't, is there?"

"No, not exactly," Mother replied—"just a little eccentricity."

It seems there was this "Cud'n Willie", as Mother called him, who, though no millionaire, could definitely be called "eccentric".

Cud'n Willie was a member of a very old, very "nice" family—as one's cousins always are. They were, of course, very wealthy "befo' de wah", and even during Reconstruction days managed to scrape together enough money to send Cud'n Willie to law school at Harvard. Cud'n Willie was the perfect flower of young Southern manhood, and he did nothing at Harvard to make his family suspect there was anything "different" about him. He got along well with his classmates—Southern gentlemen usually did in the barbaric North.

The family did note with pride, however, that Willie had a brilliant mind. He breezed through Harvard law school in nothing flat, graduating *magna cum laude*, and picked up several foreign languages in passing, along with his other courses. About this time, some relative willed him a set of *The Harvard Classics*, which Willie prized more than any other possession. His family took this as another indication of their son's capacities—Not only was he so smart, but he appreciated "the finer things".

After graduation, Willie made the Grand Tour, as all true gentlemen did in those days. When he came back, he had added to his store of languages—he spoke and wrote eight fluently. His mother was just bursting with pride—Here was her dear Willie, so brilliant and accomplished at such an early age, and just ready to step into a large law practice. Surely he would be President in no time!

Willie, however, had other plans—just slightly different from those of his family. The only thing he really liked about his life was his *Harvard*

Classics, and since he couldn't spend his time in an easy chair reading, he saw only one other course—and he took it. Cud'n Willie became a hobo—the genuine ride-the-rails kind of hobo!

His mother spent the remaining twenty years of her life explaining to friends that Willie was “away on a vacation”—she never quite recovered from the shock.

Willie, however, was not at all disturbed by his family's reaction to his choice of a vocation—he was perfectly happy.

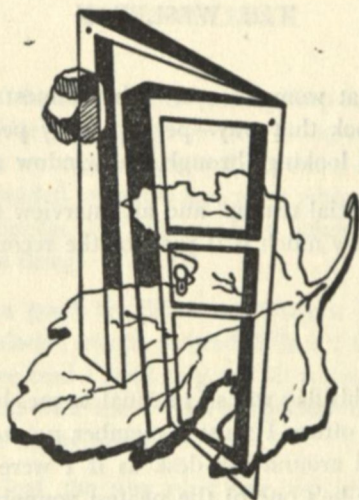
He still had his treasured *Harvard Classics*, and he never parted with them. Even as a hobo, Cud'n was a bit eccentric. He would work in one city until he had enough cash to ship his *Harvard Classics*, by first-class freight, on to the next city. Then, in the time-honored hobo style he would go after them. In this way Cud'n Willie followed his *Harvard Classics* all over the country.

World War I interrupted his travels a bit, though as everybody said it was nobody's fault but his own. Willie had managed to retain his fluency in languages, and German happened to be one of the languages he knew best. When the war first broke out, there was a lot of book-burning and syp-hunting, which Willie didn't like a bit. To show his contempt for this sort of thing, he decided not to speak any language but German.

It wasn't long before he landed in a Federal prison, accused of spying. In spite of all the pleadings of his friends and relations, Cud'n Willie refused to indicate any knowledge of any language but German, and as a consequence he remained in jail for the duration of the war.

The story goes that as soon as news of the Armistice reached his cell, Willie banged on the door and demanded to be let “out of this medieval pest hole”. The prison warden nearly had apoplexy, for those were the first English words Cud'n Willie had spoken for two years! For the first time he called on his friends for help—in getting his *Harvard Classics* from the prison officials.

Cud'n Willie lived to a very old age, still following his precious books from one hobo jungle to another. Since he was such a smart man, I don't doubt he knew well he was fast becoming the skeleton in the family closet, and that for generations to come mothers would chastise their sons and wives their husbands with the words “You're getting just like your Cud'n Willie—Him and his *Harvard Classics*.”



A Leaf, A Door, A Stone

—and all of our lives is written in the twisting of a leaf upon a bough,
a door that opened, and a stone.

Thomas Wolfe in *Of Time and the River*

By Jean Thrasher

March 2, 1954

Today was my birthday, and as always in the last few years, I was rather amused at my friends at the office, Bill, Nancy and Estelle, in fact all the younger group, were having a *tete a tete* when I walked in this morning. They looked up guiltily and half-pityingly when they realized I was in the room. How tactful they try to be—dodging the issue and yet inviting me out for dinner “for no special reason”. Murray was the only one who laughed with me. He understands how it is to be old. To be old—it sounds as ominous as a telegram looks grinning up with its yellow face and slick cellophane window. How strange it is that I never feel older; the things about me are just newer. I look in the mirror and all I see is a photographic portrait like those they take of famous people to show all the “character” in their faces. Of course, it’s the same nose I’ve powdered for years. To me it’s not much different.

I interviewed a woman today, who was accused of vagrancy. I say interviewed, but we actually sat across the visiting room at each other. Her eyes were so deep I felt as if I could see a movie film of her life rolling through them. She never would say anything. She hardly moved a muscle. It was as if she were already dead. I thought I was pretty hardened to every-

thing by now, but that woman's eyes; They almost haunt me. I've seen very few faces that look that way—perhaps only people on a train who don't know anybody's looking through the window at them.

A dinner "for no special reason" and an interview that didn't pan out—that's my birthday. How much is it just for the record. Sixty-three years—a piece of eternity.

March 3, 1954

I don't know why this day was so unusual to me, but it was. We have a new copy boy in the office. I must remember not to look so grim when I'm typing. He edged around my desk as if I were Medusa personified. I'm sorry too, because he's one of the neatest youngsters we've had in the city room in a long time. Of course, he put on the usual know-it-all manner for the benefit of the oldtimers, but he looked good just the same. I saw him watching the teletype with a fascination that seems reserved for the very young of the machine age or those from my buggy and carrier pigeon era.

There it is again. I wonder if I'll ever settle into reminiscence like most people. I don't really think so though. To me every day is worth twenty of the past. No, I can't say that without qualifications because I could pick about a hundred days and they would add up to just about the sum of my whole life. Days when a door stood open just long enough for me to know that inside was something I didn't know, I didn't understand, and yet I always knew was there. This sounds like the raving of a mental case.

It's funny. All my life I've worked with words and yet sometimes I wonder if they really say anything that's worth saying. It's all in the feel of a word, and I don't believe a word ever feels the same to two people. Again I must qualify—to two people who are not in love. Love's a strange word in itself. For me—I've either never felt it or have never stopped feeling it. Of course, I like to rationalize by choosing the second explanation.

I've almost written two days' entries, and I haven't figured out yet why today was fresh and interesting. That's just one of those questions with a thousand explanations but no answer. Perhaps it's a little bit of spring.

March 4, 1954

I played hookey today. Not really, of course, because I did feel a little dizzy when my feet hit the floor this morning and now that headache's started again. Sometimes, in moments of desperation, I wish the pain would just reach a climax and get it over with.

My, I sound dreary when I'm really not at all. I've been sitting on the

porch all morning just feeling the sun searing deep into my bones. It makes you tingle all over. It seems strange to be writing my diary before lunch, but I noticed a stone a moment ago and I went a little philosophical on comparing a stone rounded by water and wind with a person rounded, outlined with his experiences. It's too good an analogy to take further. It would spoil the whole thing.

I've been reading a good bit. How satisfying it is to read one of the thousand books you always meant to read. When I think of the thousands upon thousands I have read I tend to get a bit smug, but I always look on my bookshelf and find over ten I haven't gotten around to. That bookshelf always keeps me in my place.

Like that begonia leaf, the tiny pink one, my mind feels just as fresh as that shiny new thing. It's ready to accept, to know. To draw into itself and push outward. The wind twists it and shows its soft underside. When the sun shines through a begonia it's red—red and warm and alive. It's strange how I notice new things. Maybe they look newer because I look through worn eyes, or maybe it's because I am able to understand a new leaf because of life is a sort of timed timelessness.

(This is the last entry in the diary of Olivia Andrews.)

